

Peer Facilitating

Zionsville Community High School is Making it Happen!



WE ARE

Zionsville Community Schools provide customized 21st century experiences that ensure maximum student growth leading to productive citizenship in the world community

Zionsville Community High School is an academically competitive public high school. The curriculum presents a rigorous challenge to the college bound student. Through the commitment of students, staff, parents and community members, Zionsville Community High School will continue to provide excellence in education by: providing academic and co-curricular programs in a safe and healthy environment, directing technologically enabled, student-focused learning, implementing student accountability for academic success, and empowering students to participate positively in the global community.

Approximately 16% of ZCHS students receive special services through the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Civil Rights Act of 1973. These students excel in and out of the classroom. They also pass the statewide assessment at a higher rate than the state average for all students.

OUR STUDENTS & FAMILIES

Once a small farming community, Zionsville is now an affluent suburb of Indianapolis and has maintained its aesthetic charm and sense of community. Most residents are in professional or managerial careers. The community provides support for education.

OUR PROMISING PRACTICE

Peer Facilitating is an accredited class offered to 10th-12th graders at ZCHS. Students enrolled in this class, better known as peers, serve as positive mentors for students in the Life Skills classroom. Without Peer Facilitating, students in the Life Skills classroom would have very limited interactions with students in the general education setting. Having peers come into the Life Skills classroom affords students with significant disabilities the opportunity to access their same age typically developing peers in all areas of their day.

Peers work one-to-one, and in small groups with the students in the Life Skills classroom to model appropriate social skills, how to execute jobs and task correctly, and how to navigate their day as contributing student at ZCHS and in the community. Throughout the day, students in the Life Skills program have peers assigned to them in all areas of their daily schedule. By doing so, peers receive hands-on instruction about different types of disabilities, effective teaching strategies, and current best practices for increasing the independence of students in the Life Skills classroom who have significant disabilities.

Peer Facilitating is a symbiotic relationship between the students in the Life Skill Program and the peers. Most traditionally, the students in the Life Skill Program will learn from the positive examples set by the peers. It is without a doubt; however, that the students in the Life Skill Program are the ones who teach the peers how to be accepting, compassionate and knowledgeable members of society, not just the teachers. The lives of the students in the Life Skills Program and the peers are equally enriched due to the opportunity they both have through Peer Facilitating.

OUR STEPS

Peers are able to take up to six semesters of Peer Facilitating. There is a different curriculum for each semester of enrollment. The Peer Facilitating curriculum teaches students how to assist without enabling, prompting hierarchies, relevance of different interventions, and disability awareness. Peers are graded based on daily participation as well as course work. Peers must maintain a C+ average or higher to continue in the program.

IN OUR OWN WORDS

"Peer gave me the opportunity to form lifelong friendships with students I wouldn't have had the chance to interact with otherwise. Honestly the students helped me and impacted me more than I helped them. They taught me so much about patience, love, and acceptance. Peer is one of the only things I miss from high school. The life skills classroom will always have a piece of my heart."

—Taylor Hoftiezer, photographed on the far right. Taylor is currently studying special education at Purdue University.

"Peer gave me the opportunity to discover my love and passion for special education. It changed my life and I will always hold and cherish the moments of being a peer!"

—Lizzy Coleman, photographed in the middle. Lizzy is currently studying special education at Marion University.

For more information about our school or corporation, please contact Jennifer Davis at (317) 873-3355 ext.12033, jdavis@zcs.k12.in.us or visit our website: <http://www.zcs.k12.in.us>.